

James 2:1-13
Equity: Favoritism Defiles Faith

Introduction:

1. Put God's Word into Practice: Love God and Neighbor
2. The Bible is sufficient both theologically & practically
3. Context of James

Main Point: Biblical justice is characterized by Christlike love and mercy, faithfully treating all Divine image bearers equally under God's Law.

The Command of God Instituted in the Glory of Christ (v 1)

1. *Show No Partiality* – lit. “Do not receive people according to their face” (their outward appearance)
2. This is Nothing New (**Ex 23:2-3, Dt 16:19, Lv 19:15**)
3. This command is connected to our Faith in Jesus Christ
 - a. It is inconsistent to have true faith in Jesus and demonstrate favoritism in the Church
 - b. Foundation: The Character of God who is no respecter of persons and shows no partiality
 - i. Our theology moves into practicality (**Dt 10:17**)
 - ii. We cannot be partial to the Divine image bearer

The Contextual Illustration (vv 2-4)

1. Context is King
 - a. *Assembly* – lit. Synagogue; Christians did not separate themselves from Judaism, rather there was a continuity between OT Judaism & Christianity
 - b. Public Officials and Others in the community were curious and fascinated by the Messianic movement
 - c. They came into the Christian Synagogue and were immediately showed honor, while ignoring the poor
2. Our Culture
 - a. Characterized by idolizing the influential, prizing victimization, and scorning the wealthy
 - b. Because someone is wealthy does not mean they are somehow characterized by greed
 - c. Because someone is poor does not mean they have some higher virtue (All are Sinners!)
3. Christians are called by God to treat the wealthy and the poor equally, since both are created in the Image of God
 - a. To categorize is to discriminate and pervert justice

- b. What do you notice when you meet someone?
- c. This text does not teach to be close to everyone equally, Rather it teaches us to treat everyone with equal dignity

The Christian Identity (v 5)

1. The foundation for treating people impartially is our Christian identity based in God's election
 - a. God's treatment of us in His election of us is the standard by which we treat others
2. *The Poor of the World:* How James identifies Christians
 - a. God elected those who become dependent on Him
 - b. God was not partial in His choice of believers – He did not go to the best of the best, the elite
 - c. God chose the lowly and despised (**1 Cor 1:27-29**)
 - d. Jesus came to our spiritually dead corpse, saw our poverty and need, rebellion and laid down His life
 - e. Jesus became poor to make us rich (**2 Cor 8:9**)

The Curious Irony (vv 6-7)

1. These believers exalted those who persecuted the church while at the same time belittled the godly and righteous
2. The Irony: Christians are tempted to win the world's approval at the expense of the godly
3. Don't adapt to the world, thinking you can win approval

The Confronting Insistence of the Law of Love (vv 8-9)

1. When you sin by showing favoritism, you break God's Law, which is founded on love (Love does not Win)
2. Partiality is typified by spiritual blindness to true need
3. All need God's Grace, Mercy & Redemption!

The Commanding Inspiring Source (vv 10-11)

1. Breaking part of God's Law makes guilty of the whole
2. Disobedience offends God and His Character, renounces fellowship with Him and His authority over us
3. Partiality does not emulate the standards of God

The Concluding Implication (vv 12-13)

1. Partiality defiles faith and shows no mercy
2. An unmerciful heart only looks at outward appearances and makes judgments based on external observances
3. God welcomes the spiritually destitute into His kingdom
4. EX: The Pharisee and the Tax Collector (**Luke 8:9-14**)